

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SENGHOR INAUGURATES AFRICAN WRITERS DAY

PARIS, SEPTEMBER 14--HALF OF ALL RESEARCHERS IN
SENEGAL'S NATIONAL ARCHIVES ARE AMERICANS, ACCORDING TO
PRESIDENT LEOPOLD S. SENGHOR. INAUGURATING AN EXHIBITION
OF BOOKS BY AFRICANS RESIDENT IN FRANCE, HE OBSERVED
THAT WHILE ALMOST EVERY LEADING AMERICAN UNIVERSITY HAS
AN AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER, FRENCH UNIVERSITIES SEEM TO
BE LESS AND LESS INTERESTED IN AFRICA. FRENCH PRESIDENT
VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING, WITH WHOM PRES. SENGHOR
DISCUSSED THE SITUATION EARLIER IN THE WEEK, HAS PRO-
MISED TO OPEN AFRICAN STUDIES CENTERS IN TWO OR THREE
FRENCH UNIVERSITIES, SAID DR. SENGHOR.

IN AN ADDED COMMENT THAT DREW LAUGHS FROM BOTH THE
FRENCH AND AFRICANS ATTENDING THE BOOK FAIR, PRES.
SENGHOR REMARKED THAT THE INTENSE INTEREST AMONG
AMERICAN STUDENTS IN BLACK AFRICAN LITERATURE WAS
RESPONSIBLE FOR A MARKED INCREASE IN THE STUDY OF
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FRENCH ON US CAMPUSES.

ASKED ABOUT HIS OWN RELATIONS, AS AN AUTHOR, WITH
HIS READERS, DR. SENGHOR SAID MANY STUDENTS COME TO
HIM WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS LIFE AND WORK. THE BIO-
GRAPHIC INFORMATION IS EASY, HE SAID, BUT WHEN THEY
ASK FOR THE MEANING OF A POEM, I TELL THEM THAT FIRST

I WROTE IT, THEN REWROTE IT, AND NOW IT IS FINISHED;
YOU MUST TELL ME WHAT I MEANT TO SAY* THE GREATEST JOY
A WRITER CAN KNOW, HE ADDED, IS TO RECEIVE LETTERS FROM
HIS READERS.

TURNING TO ECONOMIC MATTERS, PRES. SENGHOR SAID THAT
HE HAD TOLD THE FRENCH ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS LEADERS
(CNPF) THAT FRENCH INVESTMENT IN AFRICA, AND
ESPECIALLY SENEGAL, WAS ON THE DECLINE, HAVING DROPPED
FROM 87 PERCENT OF ALL INVESTMENT AT THE TIME OF
INDEPENDENCE TO ONLY 50 PERCENT TODAY. HE HOPED THAT
DECLINE WOULD STOP AND PROPOSED A SENEGAL DAY IN PARIS
TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF INVESTMENT POSSIBILITIES IN
SENEGAL AMONG FRENCH INDUSTRIALISTS.

HE NOTED THAT ALONG WITH TUNISIAN PRESIDENT HABIB
BOURGUIBA, HE IS STUDYING CREATION OF A FRANCOPHONE
VERSION OF THE COMMONWEALTH, THE ORGANIZATION THAT
LOOSELY LINKS FORMER BRITISH COLONIES AND BRITAIN. THEY
ARE 33 OR 34 FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES IN THE UNITED NATIONS,
OBSERVED PRES. SENGHOR, ABOUT THE SAME NUMBER AS
COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES. AT PRESENT, HE SAID, THERE IS
ONLY A PRE-COMMONWEALTH, THE CONFERENCE OF FRANCOPHONE
CHIEFS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT.

THE BOOK EXHIBITION WAS ORGANIZED BY THE MAISON DE
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L'AFRIQUE (AFRICA HOUSE) IN PARIS, A COMMERCIAL AND
CULTURAL CENTER SPONSORED BY TEN FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN
COUNTRIES. ITEM.
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